Circular Migration in Zimbabwe and Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa

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About this Publication:

This book is an authoritative and insightful analysis of migration patterns and trends in sub-Saharan Africa. A key objective of the study is to show how the nature and extent of migration to, and from, African cities responds or adapts particularly to changing economic circumstances. In so doing, the study documents how and why patterns of circular migration between rural and urban areas persist, even when these patterns are not institutionally enforced.

The core of the work is on migration in Zimbabwe, analysed in the context of the post-independence period through to the crises in the 2000s. The study, based on primary data collected in surveys and through focus group discussions, offers a descriptively rich and textured analysis of the characteristics of migrants, their attitudes to migration and their rural links, and how these changed as conditions in Zimbabwe deteriorated. The political and economic changes in Zimbabwe since the 1980s transformed Harare from one of the best African cities to live in over this period to one of the worst. Harare citizens’ livelihoods exemplify, in microcosm, the central theme of the book: the re-invention of circulation and rural-urban links in response to economic change.

The author challenges the dominant view that migration from rural or urban areas continues unabated and shows that circular migration has continued and has adapted, with faster out-migration in the face of declining urban economic opportunities.
Contents Include:

- Introduction: re-inventing the wheel?
- Regional paradigms & approaches to circular migration: tropical Africa
- Regional paradigms & approaches to circular migration: Southern Africa
- Harare & Zimbabwe: from formal city to outsourced urban livelihoods
- Migrant livelihoods & migration trajectories in Harare: 1980s to 2000s
- Harare migrants' rural links & assets
- Variations in migrants' experience, perceptions & options
- Social & cultural attachments to rural settings & homes
- Attacking the urban poor & abusing rural links: Operation Murumbatsvina 2005